

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SP-02 L-01 INR-05

CIAE-00 EB-03 OMB-01 OPIC-02 PRS-01 /041 W

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R 092000Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7655

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KINGSTON 1790

LIMDIS

EO 11652: XGDS 1

TAGS: PFOR, US, JM, VZ

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH MINISTER OF MINING AND NATURAL
RESOURCES - ALLAN ISAACS

1. I MET WITH THE MINISTER AT HIS SUGGESTION AT HIS HOME
FOR AN HOUR THE EVENING OF MAY 7. HE SAID THAT HE HAD
BEEN OFFERED THE JOB OF AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S. TWICE IN
THE PAST FEW MONTHS BUT THAT HE HAD RELUCTANTLY DECIDED
NOT TO TAKE IT FOR THE TIME BEING. WHILE HE FELT THAT
HE WOULD ENJOY IT AND HAD PERHAPS EARNED IT AFTER 33
DIFFICULT YEARS IN POLITICS, HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE
POLICIES OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND FELT THAT IT WAS HIS
DUTY TO REMAIN HERE.

2. HE WAS AWARE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD LIKE TO HAVE
HIS PARLIAMENTARY SEAT AND THAT HE HAD AGREED TO GIVE IT
UP BEFORE HIS TERM EXPIRED AND EXPECTED THEN TO BE
CONSIDERED FOR WASHINGTON. (COMMENT: ISSAACS'
CONSTITUENCY IS A SAFE PNP SEAT AND P. M. MANLEY
REPORTEDLY WANTS IT FOR ONE OF THE YOUNGER LEFT WING
MEMBERS OF THE PARTY. IT IS ALMOST CERTAIN THE SEAT WILL BE
DIVIDED INTO TWO CONSTITUENCIES IN THE REDIS-
TRICTING DUE TO TAKE PLACE BEFORE 1976)

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3. I ASKED WHETHER THIS MEANT THAT THE AMBASSADORIAL

POST WOULD BE LEFT VACANT, SUGGESTING TO THE MINISTER THAT THIS MIGHT BE MISCONSTRUED IN WASHINGTON, AND EXPRESSING AT THE SAME TIME RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE ABILITY OF THE PRESENT CHARGE TO HANDLE THE JOB. ISAACS AGREED THAT HILL DID NOT HAVE THE CAPACITY OR NECESSARY MATURITY BUT AVOIDED A DIRECT ANSWER, SAYING ONLY THAT THE MATTER WAS BEING GIVEN CONSIDERATION

4. THE MINISTER SAID THAT HE CONTINUED TO BE DIS- ENCHANTED WITH THE COURSE BEING TAKEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO WAS CONTINUING HIS MOVEMENT TO THE LEFT. IN ISAACS' VIEW, MANLEY WAS COMMITTED TO A ONE-PARTY, SOCIALIST FORM OF GOVERNMENT, ALONG "DRAB" AFRICAN LINES. HE FELT THIS WAS TOTALLY WRONG, FOR JAMAICA HAD INHERITED A COMPARTIVELY SOPHISTICATED TWO-PARTY SYSTEM BASED ON LAW, AND THAT MANLEY'S OBJECTIVES REPRESENTED A REAL AND DANGEROUS REGRESSION.

5. I RECALLED THE MINISTER'S CONVERSATION WITH CHARGE D'AFFAIRES HEWITT BACK IN OCTOBER '73 (KINGSTON 3588), IN WHICH HE HAD SHOWN AN ALMOST CLAIRVOYANT FORESIGHT. HE SAID THAT HIS VIEWS HAD NOT CHANGED SINCE THE, AND THAT HE HAD TRIED TO WARN THE ALUMINUM COMPANIES AS TO WHAT THEY SHOULD DO TO AVOID PUNITIVE GOVERNMENT ACTION BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, THEY HAD NOT LISTENED TO HIM. HE CHARACTERIZED THE BAUXITE LEVY AS EXCESSIVE AND IMPROPERLY HANDLED, AND WHILE HE THOUGHT MOST OF THE COMPANIES APPEAR NOW TO HAVE ASSIMILATED IT, HE KNEW THAT HARPER AND ALCOA FELT "BETRAYED", AS INDEED THEY HAD BEEN, SINCE HE KNEW THAT MANLEY HAD GIVEN THEM ASSURANCES WHICH WERE NOT LIVED UP TO. AT THIS POINT, MRS. ISAACS WHO WAS IN AND OUT OF THE ROOM DURING THE EARLY PART OF THE CONVERSATION, SAID TWICE, "YOU CAN'T TRUST MICHAEL MANLEY EVEN IF HE PUTS IT IN WRITING".

6. THE MINISTER SAID THAT THERE WAS A REAL SPLIT IN THE CABINET AND THAT ONE GROUP FOR WHICH HE WAS THE SPOKESMAN WAS EXTREMELY DISAFFECTED WITH THE COURSE MANLEY WAS TAKING. HE FELT, HOWEVER, THERE WERE ENOUGH

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MODERATE PNP VOTES IN PARLIAMENT, TOGETHER WITH OPPOSITION JLP VOTES TO FORESTALL THE BASIC CHANGES IN THE FORM OF THE JAMAICAN GOVERNMENT PRESENTLY CONTEMPLATED BY P M MANLEY AND HIS LEFT-WING SUPPORTERS

7. ISAACS SAID THAT THE MAYOR OF KINGSTON, RALPH

BROWN, (WHO HE THINKS HAS CONSIDERABLE CLOUT) AND THE CITY COUNCIL WERE EXTREMELY ANGRY ABOUT THE WAY THE VISIT OF THE QUEEN HAD BEEN HANDLED, WITH MANLEY HOGGING THE LIMELIGHT, WHICH HE SAID WAS NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROPER PROCEDURE ON PREVIOUS VISITS. (APPARENTLY MANLEY VETOED A CEREMONY TO PRESENT THE KEY TO THE CITY TO THE QUEEN).

8. I ASKED ISAACS WHO HE THOUGHT MIGHT HAVE THE CAPABILITY OF ACTIVELY LEADING THE MODERATE OPPOSITION WITHIN THE PNP BESIDES HIMSELF. HE REPLIED THAT P.J. PATTERSON WAS ALSO DISSATISFIED WITH MANLEY'S LEADERSHIP, BUT HAD NOT YET MADE UP HIS MIND WHICH WAY TO GO. HE FELT THAT PATTERSON HAD MATURED GREATLY SINCE HE HAD ENTERED ACTIVE POLITICS AND THAT HE WAS EMERGING AS A STRONG POTENTIAL LEADER. GERARD

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INFOR AMEMBASSY CARACAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KINGSTON 1790

LIMDIS

9. I QUESTIONED THE MINISTER ABOUT THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS WITH ESSO OVER THE REFINERY, COMMENTING THAT IT APPEARED TO ME THAT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE PARTIES IF THE GOVERNMENT WAS TO START ITS NEGOTIATIONS ON THE BASIS OF BOOK VALUE. HE CONFIRMED THAT RECENT AGREEMENTS WITH VENEZUELA, WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED AS FIRM, HAD PRECIPITATED THE GOVERNMENT MOVE TO BUY-OUT ESSO AND ALSO CONFIRMED THAT THE GOJ WAS STARTING WITH BOOK VALUE. HE PERSONALLY FELT THAT

THIS WAS IMPROPER, AND THAT AT THIS MOMENT IT MIGHT BE
BEST FOR THE COMPANY TO "HANG TOUGH". I ASKED HIM ABOUT
THE TIME ELEMENT AND HE STATED THAT THERE WERE PRESSURES
FROM THE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT ARISING FROM THE FACT THAT
THE GOV HAD COMMITTED ITSELF TO JAPAN ON A FORWARD SALE
OF BAUXITE AT UNREALISTIC PRICE

10. THE MINISTER CHARACTERIZED THE LUANA REFINERY PROJECT
AS TOTALLY IMPRACTICAL SINCE, AMONG OTHER THINGS, IT WAS
DEPENDENT ON EXPORT SALES. HE CLAIMED THE PROJECT WAS
NOW VITUALLY DEAD.

11. COMMENT: ISAACS IS A WARM, FRIENDLY AND OUTGOING
PERSON, WHO HAS MADE NO SECRET OF HIS PRO-U.S. STANCE.
HIS DISSATISFACTION WITH THE LEFT OF THE PNP HAS BEEN
EXPRESSED TO THE EMBASSY ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS OVER THE
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PAST 18 MONTHS. HE GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF A SOMEWHAT
DISCONNECTED AND BUMBLING PERSON, AND I QUESTION
WHETHER HE HAS THE STRENGTH OR THE BACKING TO STAND UP
TO THE PRIME MINISTER EFFECTIVELY IN THE LONG RUN

12. IT SEEMS POSSIBLE THAT MANLEY MIGHT SEE ADVANTAGES
IN LEAVING THE AMBASSADORIAL SLOT IN WASHINGTON VACANT
FOR THE TIME BEING. I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY OTHER CANDIDATES
AT THE MOMENT. THE APPOINTMENT OF ISAACS, IF HE IS
PERSUADED TO TAKE IT, MIGHT NOT BE A NET PLUS FOR THE
U.S. SINCE HE WILL NOT BE EFFECTIEELY PLUGGED IN TO
THE PNP LEADERSHIP.

13. IF FIND SOMEWHAT PUZZLING ISAAC'S REMARK ABOUT TIME
PRESSURES BEING APPLIED TO THE GOJ BY THE VENEZUELANS
BECAUSE OF A GOV COMMITMENT FOR THE FORWARD SALE OF
BAUXITE TO JAPAN (PARA 2). ANYLIGHT THE DEPARTMENT
OR EMBASSY CARACAS CAN SHED ON THIS POINT WOULD BE
APPRECIATED. GERARD

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